(b) if so, whether Government have given any preliminary consideration for formulation of such policy; and

(c) if so, what priorities have been set for policy formulation and by when it would be finalised?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SUNDER LAL PATWA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The task of formulation of Food Processing Policy is under way. Broadly, the Food Processing Policy would cover issues relating to availability of raw material, backward linkages, processing facilities including post-harvest infrastructure, packaging food quality and safety, marketing of products—domestic and export, awareness about processed food and fiscal incentives.

As wide ranging consultations would be required with the State Governments and other inter-related departments of Government of India before the policy is announced, it is difficult to indicate a timeframe within which the policy will be finalised.

*203. [Postponed]

Survival of Small Scale Industries

*204. SHRI GAYA SINGH:
SHRI J. CHITHARANJAN:

Will the Minister of SMALL SCALE INDUSTRIES AND AGRO AND RURAL INDUSTRIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Small Scale Industries (SSIs) will not be able to survive when India will be totally free from the Quota Restrictions (QRs) after April, 2001;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) how Government plan to face such a situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH): (a) and (b) The Small Scale Industries in India have enough resilience to withstand the impact of phasing out of Quantitative Restrictions beyond April, 2001 as is evident from their recent track record.

(c) The Government has put in place several measures to help our small enterprises become globally competitive. These include special focus on areas

such as technology upgradation, infrastructure assistance through cluster approach, timely availability of credit, adoption of modern management practices, use of electronic infrastructure and other IT applications, marketing and timely information dissemination, including sensitisation of small industries to the emerging challenges of trade liberalisation.

Status of Economic Packages for States

*205. SHRI S. RAMACHANDRAN PILLAI:
SHRI E. BALANANDAN:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) how many economic packages have been announced by the different Prime Ministers, so far, during 1980s and 1990s for North-Eastern Region, Punjab, Jammu & Kashmir and other States;

(b) the present status of those economic packages;

(c) whether the Prime Minister, being the Chairman of Planning Commission, has made a proper system in Planning Commission for the allocation of special funds for the States which deserve special attention; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING, MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STATISTICS AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS AND PUBLIC GRIEVANCES OF THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS (SHRI ARUN SHOURIE): (a) Announcements have been made from time to time by Prime Ministers when they go on visits to the State. These announcements are sometimes called "packages" and are for overall development and benefit of the State. During the last three years, such announcements have been made for Jammu & Kashmir , West Bengal, North-Eastern Region and Sikkim. The then Prime Minister during his visit to Jammu & Kashmir on 13th-14th February, 1997 announced some measures for accelerated development of the State.